dary school teachers, and 12 percent of the upper-secondary school teachers had taught 30 years or more.

Persuasion, Not Strikes

The ministry's pressure tactics do not make recruitment any easier, Mr. Yokoyama says, but an equally tough obstacle is the "more conservative" bent of today's young people. They have what the union leader calls "diversified demands" that are difficult for the union to meet.

Indeed, the union's most effective tool in meeting any demands is persuasion. Public-service employees have lacked the legal power to strike since the postwar Occupation, and those who violate the ban often find costly economic sanctions awaiting them.

Shinji Yoshikiyo, a J.T.U. member who teaches in the conservative Yamaguchi prefecture, says that for one hour of strike time, his principal would cut his monthly pay check by about $8 for several months. If he were to go on strike for several days, his annual pay raise would be postponed for three months.

While the penalties may not sound drastic, Mr. Yokoyama says the cumulative long-term effect can be a reduction in teachers' lump-sum retirement and pension benefits.

In the 25-year period beginning in 1957, the union leader says, some 751,000 teachers have received some kind of sanction for union-related activities. In addition, 400 have been arrested (with 193 of those indicted), and 126 have been fired from their jobs.

The Paramount Issues

More distressing to the membership, however, has been the union's recent ineffectiveness in dealing with several issues of deep and immediate concern:

• **Teacher salaries.** When the economic boom of the 1960's began to draw prospective teachers to more lucrative positions with industry, the government for the first time began to see the need to buttress society's good will toward teachers with attractive pay. Salaries shot up, rising by more than 15 percent in 1973, then by a hefty 30 percent the following year, when Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka made the decision to put teaching pay scales on a par with those in other professions.

Because of budget problems caused by Japan's huge national deficit, however, teacher wages were frozen in 1982, rose only slightly more than 1 percent the following year, and received another nominal boost last year.

With the budget crisis unresolved, and with the Diet paving the way this fall for further increases in defense spending with its vote to uncap a 30-year ceiling on military expenditures, teachers foresee a future of salaries that are steady-state at best.

• **Working conditions.** The comprehensive nature of Japanese schooling—including the broad, almost parental, role traditionally expected of teachers—has led to ever-widening demands on teachers' time.

Actual classroom instruction, which, according to Yasukazu Nakamichi, an official of the Osaka Teachers' Union, can be up to 30 hours a week for elementary-school teachers (the Ministry of Education says the figure is 23 hours), is augmented by such required tasks as coaching sports teams, supervising extracurricular activities, monitoring libraries, providing guidance and career counseling, visiting with parents, and performing some routine school maintenance work.

Add to that the regular teaching chores of course preparation, administrative meetings, attending school events, and keeping up with developments in the field, says Mr. Nakamichi, and working hours become brutal for some teachers. This would be acceptable, he says, were it not for the current freeze on salaries and government's unwillingness to deal with unmanageable increases in class size.

"Maximum class sizes in the United States and Europe are average class sizes in Japan," he says. "Either teachers should be allowed to work fewer hours or the schools should hire more teachers and cut class sizes."

Some teachers may also balk at the frequent required transfers imposed by the system. Teachers can expect to change schools every four or five years and, if they teach in elementary schools, to routinely switch grade levels from year to year.

But most teachers agree that such flexibility improves the quality of instruction, says the East-West Center's Mr. Cummings, making schools—especially elementary schools—"a seamless educational unit" with no problems of vested interest or protected turf.

'Seven Seals for a Day Off'

The system's long hours, static pay, and regimentation are a different matter, however, and young Japanese teachers are becoming more and more outspoken about the troublesome aspects of their calling.

Kinio Nishimura, an English teacher at the Kudamatsu Technical High School, says his "most difficult challenge" has nothing whatever to do with imparting knowledge; it comes, he says, from the constant requirement to submit to the system's well-established bureaucratic rituals. "You need to have seven official seals to get a day off," he complains.

Mr. Nishimura is in his early 30's and, like many of the profession's younger members, finds he resents the increasing stress that school duties put on his personal life.

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"In Japanese schools, there is a standard rule," says one retired teacher. "Obedience to higher authority is tied to promotion and keeps discipline in the ranks."

Minimum Requirements for Teacher Certificates

School level/ Class of certificate	Levels of academic attainment	Minimum Credit Requirements[1] Total	General education	Teaching subjects[2]	Professional subjects[3]
Kindergarten:					
2nd class	2 years beyond upper secondary school	62	18	8	18
1st class	Bachelor's degree	124	36	16	28
Elementary school:					
2nd class	2 years beyond upper secondary school	62	18	8	22
1st class	Bachelor's degree	124	36	16	32
Lower secondary school:					
2nd class	2 years beyond upper secondary school	62	18	A20 B16	10
1st class	Bachelor's degree	124	36	A40 B32	14
Upper secondary school:					
2nd class	Bachelor's degree	124	36	A40 B32	14
1st class	Master's degree or one year beyond Bachelor's degree	154	36	A62 B52	14

[1] A lecture class of one hour a week, requiring two hours of student preparation, and of 15 week's duration, yields one credit. A seminar class of two hours a week, requiring one hour of student preparation, yields one credit. Laboratory classes require three hours per week in laboratory for one credit.

[2] "Teaching subject" means the subject in which the prospective teacher specializes. The minimum number of credits for teaching subjects varies according to the subject areas which the prospective secondary teacher will teach. "A" requirement is for teachers of social studies, science, industrial arts, home economics, and vocational subjects, while "B" is for the other teachers.

[3] "Professional subjects" include the theory of pedagogy, pedagogical psychology, teaching methods, etc. Up to one half of the total minimum number of credits for professional subjects may, for the time being, be replaced with credits earned in teaching subjects, for lower secondary teachers of music and fine arts, as well as for upper secondary teachers of mathematics, science, music, fine arts and crafts, calligraphy, agriculture, industry, business, fishery, and mercantile marine.

Note: In order to hold a teacher certificate for special schools for the handicapped, it is necessary to acquire a specific number of credits in specialized subjects relating to special education (10 credits for the 2nd class certificate and 10 credits for the 1st class certificate), in addition to the 2nd or 1st teacher certificate for ordinary schools.

Source: National Ministry for Science, Education, and Culture

Distribution of Teachers By Level of Preparation, 1980

Level of Preparation	Elementary Teachers	Lower Secondary Teachers	Upper Secondary Teachers
Master's or Doctorate degree course	0.2%	0.8%	4.8%
Bachelor's degree	50.6	68.1	81.7
Completion of 2-year course beyond upper secondary education	37.1	28.7	12.1
Completion of upper secondary course	12.1	2.4	1.6

Source: National Institute for Educational Research

Average Teaching Hours* Per Week for Public-School Teachers, 1980

School level	Teaching hours
Elementary school	22.6
Lower secondary school	22.6
Upper secondary school	15.2

Working hours for subject teaching only. In addition to subject teaching, school teachers usually devote their working time to such work as extra-curricular activities, school events, preparation of lessons, marking pupils' papers, etc.

Source: National Ministry of Science, Education, and Culture

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He is at school most days until after 6 P.M., he says, goes to the office during much of his summer vacation, and rarely finds the time to use his allotted leave.

Now, says the young high-school teacher, he tries to leave school early whenever his coaching and counseling allow, to spend more time with his own family. "School administrators cannot expect teachers to give their lives to schools when schools provide no reasonable salary increases," he says.

Generations of Self-Sacrifice

Such attitudes among the profession's young are near-blasphemy to teachers like Goro Hattori. At 45, Mr. Hattori comes from another generation, one that believes schools impart not only knowledge but also a sense of "what the culture stands for."

There are two kinds of teachers, Mr. Hattori says, those who are worried about salaries, promotions, and workload, and those who "have dedicated their lives to bringing children to a better condition." Only the latter, he says, are worthy of the title *sensei*—a term for "teacher" implying the highest respect.

An elementary-school teacher in Yokohama, Mr. Hattori exemplifies the traditional spirit of self-sacrifice that has earned for Japanese teachers the society's admiration. He spends much of his free time and discretionary income collecting and creating video resource material for the moral-education classes he and his wife conduct in their respective schools.

Also, he drives himself to make every class the best it can be. In music classes, he says, he must strain his voice to reach the proper pitch for his children, but to do otherwise would be to fail them.

Mr. Hattori has no problem with the way schools are organized or run. He reserves his criticisms for teachers—like Mr. Nishimura—who he says have "lost a sense of what schools were established to do."

Tarnished Respect

The public, too, is becoming more critical of the once-revered teaching profession. Teachers are more likely to be blamed than policies or institutions for such current social problems as the increasing rates of juvenile crime and school violence.

But such experts as the Nagoya University educational sociologist Hidenori Fujita say that the causes for declining respect are complex and multidimensional.

Schools have become "secularized" since the postwar reforms, says Mr. Fujita, giving both parents and teachers the freedom to express differing opinions and attitudes on a wide range of educational matters. He explains that before the war the education system was used to further the so-called "Emperor system," with its rigid lines of authority and its unquestioned social compacts.

The influx of the more questioning postwar generation into the teaching ranks, coupled with the changes brought about by economic growth and urbanization, has produced "a qualitative change in the linkages between school, family, and community," he says. And with that change the old moral authority of the teacher has been gradually undermined.

The vast extension of educational opportunity during the last decades has contributed to the undermining, the sociologist adds. "Until recently, school had been a single, monopolistic agent of cognitive training," he says, "and teachers had enjoyed a monopoly of knowledge, skills, and even moral authority."

Now, many parents have educational credentials equal to or greater than those of their children's teachers. This fact, along with the rise of the supplemental *juku* and *yobiko* cram schools, has demystified the public-school teacher's role in perpetuating the culture.

Inadequate Training

Other educators place a large share of blame for the profession's current problems on teacher training.

Most Japanese educators agree that education schools, like their American counterparts, suffer in general from a lack of prestige within their universities. Perhaps as a result of this relatively poor academic standing, says the Hiroshima University education dean Yusaka Okihara, too many schools put their emphasis on theoretical research and neglect practical training.

In fact, teacher certification takes only a few weeks of actual classroom experience. Prospective high-school teachers usually either intern for three weeks at model schools attached to their universities or return to their own high schools for a similar period of practical training.

On-the-Job Training

The situation has led to a system in which teachers must learn on the job—often at the expense of classroom discipline and personal well-being.

"It was only this year, during my fourth year of teaching, that I really got the guidance I needed from a senior teacher," says Reiko Okido, an elementary-school teacher at a rural school in the Yamaguchi prefecture.

"When I started, I felt I should cover everything in the curriculum guide," she says. "I thought I was doing everything halfway. I was weak and at a loss. I didn't know what to do."

Ms. Okido's husband, a junior-high-school science teacher, says he had trouble disciplining his students in his first years but has gradually learned through experience.

"At the beginning, I always put pressure on those who did not obey," he says. "Nowadays, I sit back and watch more. I see why they misbehave, what is missing."

'Time for Practical Training'

Among the suggestions being offered for dealing with the teacher-training dilemma is a controversial recommendation that an entire internship year—spent with supervision from master teachers—be required before certification.

But though teachers'-union officials say they want a better training system—one that "prizes and allows time for practical training"—they call the one-year internship a "dangerous" proposal they cannot support.

The J.T.U.'s Mr. Yokayama explains that teachers are appointed by education boards on the basis of their test scores. And while he admits that the Japanese testing system has its faults, he says the tests provide "some kind of fair and democratic system of recruitment." With the proposed internship system, he says, "applicants could be ideologically controlled."

Determining who is hired and who is not will become a greater problem with time. Already, more teachers are trained each year than are needed to fill school vacancies. As the baby-boom population now entering secondary school leaves the system over the next few years, selectivity in teacher hiring will be even more acute.

Still a High Calling

For despite the profession's problems, teaching is still considered a high calling in Japan. Hiroshi Kida, director of the National Institute for Educational Research, says that the vocation's status sustained it even during periods when pay was low. Now, he says, with the further inducements of good pay and security, "teaching continues to attract able students."

In fact, the lure of teaching is so great today among the Japanese young that more than half of those who try to enter the teaching ranks each year are turned away.

"There are more than 100,000 applicants for teaching positions each year," says the J.T.U.'s Mr. Yokayama. "Only 30,000 to 40,000 actually become teachers. The rest are just paper drivers wanting a license."

SHEPARD RANSOM

Long Hours, Many Jobs: A teacher at Kyoto's Kaichi Elementary School provides her music class with piano accompaniment; above, the school's principal, Tetsuo Oguni, shares a moment in the classroom.

Doublespeak

A careful bureaucrat, Mr. T. tells me that he sometimes writes articles for the education journals. But because the Tokyo-based organization he works for is funded by the government and works with teachers, he cannot write exactly what he wants. He must find a middle ground, he says, to please both the conservative education ministry and the liberal teachers' union. His arguments have to be extremely refined to be able to be of interest to these polarized groups.

How can you possibly write something to please both the education ministry and the union, I ask. It must be impossible.

"It's not easy," Mr. T. explains. "Even my secretary doesn't understand. When she copies one of the new articles for me and reads it, she returns to me and says, 'Mr. T., you have said nothing; this is entirely meaningless.' "

School girls learning etiquette in 1937: Though educational opportunity has expanded, incentive has not.

'THE HIDDEN LAW'

Centuries of custom have perpetuated an unwritten social code that assigns women the roles of 'good wife and wise mother,' but economic and social forces have begun—slowly—to alter the pattern.

Twenty-seven-year-old Yukiko Kunishige is a bright, free-thinking woman who excelled in school until a high-school experience she describes as "closed and narrow" ended her desire for formal education. She skipped college, opting instead for what she calls "the reality of the world."

Today, Yukiko lives at home in Kudamatsu with her parents, a single working woman, happy with her job as a draftsman in a local construction firm and determined to continue learning on her own.

In the United States, Yukiko might be considered an ideal employee—eager, stable, committed, and young. But "the reality of the world" she will find in Japan's seniority-based lifetime employment system is far less simple.

The possibility that she will marry and have children makes her an employment risk to Japanese industry. And that risk factor, coupled with her lack of college-conferred status, determined almost before she was hired how far she could advance on the job.

Even if Yukiko remains single and work-oriented, her career is likely to follow the standard path for Japanese working women, one that will probably lead to dwindling pay increases, forced "early retirement" at 50 (or perhaps even 45), and fewer retirement benefits than her male contemporaries.

For 17-year-old Masami Maruyama, the future has looked equally compromised since her parents decided they could not afford to send her to college. The ambitious Kyoto high-school junior had set her sights on a four-year university, and she planned to work hard at school and study long hours at night to master the material for the entrance exams. But now she will have to lower her goals and rethink her life.

Masami's parents want her to take a full-time job when she finishes school. "If I had been a boy," says the disappointed teenager, "the situation would be different."

Not far away, in a quiet residential neighborhood near the Shimogamo shrine in northeast Kyoto, Etsuko Kumagai plays with her 1-year-old son Takehumi. A university graduate with postgraduate training at Paris's Sorbonne, Etsuko left an excellent job at the Bank of France in Osaka to have her child. Though she is happy being a full-time mother for now, she, too, wonders about her future. "I don't know what I'll do in a few years," she says.

Etsuko's banking job will not be waiting for her when she is ready to return to work. And because she is a young mother, finding a job of comparable status and pay will be close to impossible. "Corporations don't perceive that women with children can focus their attention completely on their work," says Etsuko.

The 'Hidden Law'

Technically, the equality of women is guaranteed by Japanese law. But in reality, a social agenda forged by custom and tradition exerts a far more powerful influence on the day-to-day lives of women like Yukiko, Masami, and Etsuko.

These social forces make tacit discrimination an accepted group norm. And Japan's industrial system—a system one

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JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION

REPPARD RANSOM

Counterpoint: Apprentice geisha on a Kyoto street offer stark contrast to the smiles and peace signs of young women at Kudamatsu Senior High School, where most classes are segregated by gender to "keep students' attention on their schoolwork."

Bestsellers

The statistical handbooks say that more than 30,000 new books are published each year in Japan. That compares with 42,000 in the United States, which has twice the population.

Browsing in book stores, I get the impression that the majority of those new books are pornographic.

It is no surprise to me that the world's most prolific novelist, Sokun Kawakami, is Japanese. Mr. Kawakami has written more than 300 books. His favorite (and eternally bestselling) subject—the intimate relations between men and women.

A serious question: If pornography is so prevalent in Japan, why did Japanese officials ask me whether I had any pornography in my suitcase before they let me into the country?

A friend provides the answer: It's not the numbers, but the quality control that they're concerned about. American books and magazines "show everything," but in Japan, to conform to pornography statutes, people are hired to sit in warehouses all day covering explicit photos in publications with a special ink before they hit the news stands. Later, the buyer can remove the ink with nail-polish remover.

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scholarly work calls "paternalistic in spirit and motivation"—relies on that acceptability in pursuing such employment practices as differentiated pay scales for women, earlier retirement for women, and forced retirement after childbirth.

Education, too, though open and equal in spirit, may reinforce these gender-based conventions by bowing to the subtle influences of tradition, offering to female students only challenge enough to meet limited and preordained social roles.

"There is a hidden law in society that the man has to work and support his family and that women, for the most part, should take care of their children," explains Kazoyuki Shindo, the director of the Osaka division of the Toyo Sheet Metal Company. "That's why our unemployment rate is about 2 percent and our kids are generally well provided for at home."

Women who want to become professionals can and do, Mr. Shindo adds. "But parents, teachers, and public attitudes do not encourage further attainments in careers."

Equal Chance, Unequal Incentive

All that may be changing—slowly. The combination of increasing numbers of women in the workforce, proposed new employment laws in the Japanese Diet, and important discrimination suits in the courts, may signal a loosening of the nation's traditionally strict role stereotyping.

And though the change may not immediately affect the lives of Yukiko, Masami, and Estuko, observers predict that it will force long-term adjustments in an education system that, until now, has provided equal opportunity but unequal incentive to women.

Coeducation has been a fact of school life in Japan since the island introduced compulsory education more than a century ago. The democratic-minded restructuring of the system after World War II put even greater stress on equal access, guaranteeing a single-track educational experience through high school for men and women of all classes.

Within this egalitarian framework, however, cultural values and social traditions have colluded to perpetuate what many educators and women's rights activists agree is a de facto tracking mechanism that separates the education of the sexes by quality, if not quantity.

Focus Is on Boys

Through the nine years of compulsory education, the achievement levels for men and women are roughly comparable, most Japanese educators say. But as the competitive aspects of high school begin to take hold, preparing students for the social sorting that will occur by way of university-entrance examinations, the female students' interest in school often wanes and their academic parity begins to slip.

This could be a function of the unequal levels of parental support and encouragement given to sons and daughters, say some educators. Like Masami Maruyama, many female students find that their family's interest in school achievement is greater for male siblings.

A 1980 survey of 13,000 students in the education-conscious city of Osaka, for example, found that, in the 2nd grade, two-thirds of the boys received parental help with their homework, but less than half of the girls did.

This uneven parental involvement continued through schooling, the study showed, widening in junior and senior high school. By the second year of high school, almost three-quarters of the boys were getting some kind of extra study help from their parents, but only about one-third of the girls were.

Edward R. Beauchamp, professor of comparative education at the University of Hawaii, says that Japan's well-known "education mamas" tend to be "much more ardently involved in the quality of their son's education than in that of their daughters." It is a continuation, he says, of the tradition in which "sons become successors to the family name and property while daughters are married off into other families."

'Good Wives, Wise Mothers'

A further educational disincentive for bright young women, some scholars say, is the unwritten social code that equates marriageability with lessened academic attainment.

"It is considered unseemly for a male to marry a woman who attended a 'better' university than he attended," notes Mr. Beauchamp. "Many girls, despite high ability levels, are likely to attend a women's college offering lower-quality education but known to cultivate 'good wives and wise mothers.'"

College enrollment figures lend graphic support to this contention:

- Japan's most elite colleges—the so-called "national" universities and the several prestigious private universities from which most of the country's business and government leaders graduate—are more than 90-percent male. (This is true even though women have a higher success rate on the rigorous entrance examinations.) The few women enrolled at these institutions tend to major in only two departments—literature and education.
- The overall enrollment of women in four-year universities is barely 20 percent—up from the dismal 8-percent rate of attendance two decades ago, but still less than half of the comparable enrollment at U. S. universities.
- Two out of every three Japanese women bound for college go to the acknowledged weak link in the higher-education system—the relatively new and academically limited junior colleges. Here, 90 percent of the enrollments are female.

Junior colleges have become "the women's track in higher education," says the

Principals and Vice Principals, 1982

Position	Total	National school	Local school	Private school	Number of women	Percentage of women
Principal:						
Elementary	23,659	—	23,557	92	504	2.1%
Lower Secondary	9,822	—	9,769	53	19	0.2
Upper Secondary	4,800	—	3,720	1,080	121	2.5
Vice Principal:						
Elementary	24,388	73	24,201	114	861	3.5
Lower Secondary	10,815	77	10,563	175	68	0.6
Upper Secondary	6,710	20	5,261	1,429	69	1.0

Source: National Ministry of Science, Education, and Culture

women's-rights activist Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow, now a part-time teacher at Columbia University's Teachers' College. About 80 percent of the women enrolled in junior colleges, she adds, are majoring in one of only three fields of study—literature, home economics, and education. Even at universities, she says, 60 percent of the women study these fields.

"Women are vastly underrepresented in such fields as science, engineering, law, economics, and political science," says Ms. Fujimura-Fanselow.

Few Role Models in Teaching

But even in the field of education, women are vastly underrepresented in the higher professional ranks, a fact that other scholars say contributes further to the poor university-attendance record of female students. There are few role models in the junior and senior high schools to encourage girls to try for the top-line institutions, these scholars note.

In contrast to American elementary and secondary education, where women have been the backbone of the teaching corps for more than a century, the Japanese teaching profession is dominated by men.

Today, only 18 percent of the teachers in Japanese high schools are women, a percentage that has remained remarkably stable over the last 30 years. Nearly half of America's high-school teachers are women.

Better progress has been made at Japan's junior-high-school level, where women constitute 32 percent of the teaching ranks today—up from 4 percent in 1955.

But only at the elementary-school level do women hold a majority of teaching posts—55 percent, compared with America's some 82 percent—and that majority was gained only in recent years.

Opportunities for women are even more scarce at the administrative level. Says Akio Nakajima, the former head of the Ministry of Education's high-school programs: "Five years ago, the Association of Women Principals had 444 members. Now there are 500. That's not very many when you consider that there are 25,000 elementary schools and 10,000 junior high schools."

The Circular Problem of Status

Female teachers are hampered, some say, by the fact that they enter the system without the professional status male teachers have usually acquired by attending well-known colleges.

Such status, the noted Japanese anthropologist Chie Nakane writes in her book *Japanese Society*, is the real key to the country's social classifications. That "Japanese women are nearly always ranked as inferiors," Ms. Nakane says, is "not because their sex is considered inferior, but because women seldom hold higher social status."

Thus, the circular process that keeps society's expectations for women at a low ebb may begin and perpetuate itself in school: Status is largely a function of education; custom reduces educational opportunities for women; women enter the workforce in low-status positions where social bias molds their experience; they pass on this bias to their children by favoring their sons' education.

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Education's 'Wave of the Future'

If Harumi Aoki's students love to call her "a former housewife," it is not from any lack of respect. It's because the noted poet, recently honored with Japan's prestigious "H Prize" for one of her collections, is teaching creative writing to a class full of Osaka housewives.

Her classroom is in the Asahi Culture Center, one of thousands of adult-education centers springing up in communities across Japan. The centers are not only a cultural oasis for home-bound women but also a source of pleasure and stimulation for the country's growing population of retirees.

Located in the building housing Osaka's *Asahi News*, the Asahi Culture Center, which is partially funded by the newspaper, offers some 300 adult-education classes each quarter. Its students can learn everything from flower arranging and the traditional art of *kotto* (Japanese harp) to tax law and foreign languages.

"Housewives get bored," says Ms. Aoki. "They begin looking for something to do besides raising kids and talking to the neighbors about grocery specials."

The Wave of the Future

The center's classes are a manifestation of what government officials predict will be the wave of the future in Japanese education. As the proportion of the population 60 years of age or older expands to one in five by the year 2000, these officials say, developing new opportunities for lifelong learning will become an increasing educational priority. It is already a prominent item on the education-reform agenda of many groups.

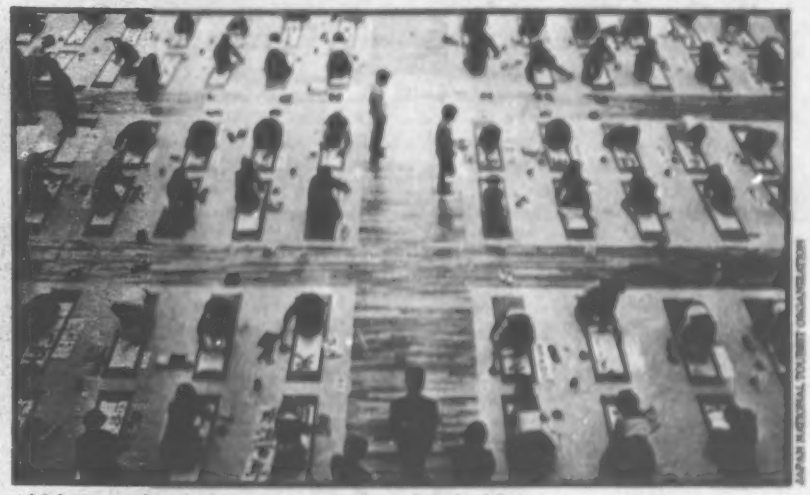
But in addition to meeting the needs of older adults, education leaders say that adult-education should also provide younger adults with a means of upgrading skills and resuming formal schooling later in life. The present education system, they say, is inflexible. For those 10 percent of students who fail to graduate from high school, and for the more than 60 percent of high-school graduates who do not go on to college, there is presently no second chance—no way to catch up with their peers at a later date.

How To Gear for Adult Learners

The business community, through advanced training courses and continuing education, fills some of the nation's adult-learning needs. But the public has begun to ask for a wider range of sources, including perhaps an expansion of what one scholar calls "specialized colleges."

Masakazu Yano, an associate professor at the Hiroshima University Research Institute for Higher Education, says that this increasing social demand for adult learning will necessitate a revision in the traditional university system, which is "centered around young people."

"The adult may have various objectives for study," writes the Kyoto University education dean Tetsuya Kobayashi in the journal *Comparative Education*, "vocational preparation, recurrent education, compensatory learning, general and cultural education, leisure activity."



Adult learners pack a school gymnasium to test their calligraphy skills in a contest.

Some of these can be met by traditional colleges and universities, says the dean, but others might best be met at the specialized colleges, which he says are "flexible in their curriculum, flexible in recruiting their teachers, and accessible to almost everyone."

One obstacle to the specialized college, he adds, is cost. Most are private schools and their tuition charges might deter those among the most likely target groups.

Top political leaders, including Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, have urged public colleges to develop more and better adult-education programs and to open up their campuses to part-time and non-degree students.

More Rhetoric Than Substance

But Mr. Yano charges that despite government rhetoric and proposal making, the public sector has seen little progress on the adult-learning front. "Adult students in university programs remain few in number," he says, "and adult learning as a concept has had little impact on the over-all university educational system."

In 1981, says Mr. Yano, only about 4,000 adult students (less than 1 percent of the total university enrollment) took courses at Japanese universities. Some 90 percent of these, he adds, were enrolled in evening courses.

The Ministry of Education counters with the fact that it has launched several experimental programs in the field—correspondence courses, university extension programs, and a new University of the Air. But to Mr. Yano, "the impact of adult learning on higher education as a whole remains small."

In fact, the number of correspondence-program graduates declined by 10 percent between 1970 and 1981, even though enrollments increased from 77,000 to 90,000 during the same period.

And in 1981—the latest year for which figures are available—only 245 of Japan's 451 universities offered public extension-program lectures. The lectures available drew some 150,000 people to the campuses that year.

The newly established University of the Air is one of the Ministry's most ambitious adult-education initiatives. This spring, it will begin enrolling students from several communities, who will watch lectures broadcast from the university's Chiba-city studios. The students will be issued course textbooks for home study and will meet periodically with designated tutors at schools in their local communities. The local schools will also administer examinations.

Initial enrollment for the University of the Air will be 7,000 students, most of them from prefectures near Tokyo. Ultimately, enrollment will be drawn from communities throughout Japan.

Other post-school learning is available via the airwaves. The national public-television network, NHK, offers not only a wide range of cultural programming but a correspondence-school program as well. In recent years, it has provided courses for high-school credit to more than 6,000 students.

(The network also broadcasts directly to schools, and in 1983 transmitted 45 radio programs and 122 television programs each week, to be integrated into the schools' regular instructional activities. Some 24,000 primary schools, 18,000 nursery schools, 11,000 kindergartens, 6,000 junior high schools, and 3,000 high schools made use of the classroom telecourses, according to network statistics.)

Isao Amagi, the director of the University of the Air project and formerly the vice-minister of education, says that such alternative programs will help to meet the "strong demand for flexibility and diversity in university education." They will offer adults "something quite different from the traditional form of university learning," he says.

And their creation, Mr. Amagi adds, signals not only that the country's education establishment is trying to adapt the "objective and content of education" to meet national needs, but also that it intends to alter "the process and the forms" of learning.

Continued from Preceding Page

But women's-rights activists like Ms. Fujimura-Fanselow argue that the underrepresentation of women in prestigious colleges and universities also grows out of the nation's two-tiered employment system. Corporations provide different opportunities for men and women, they say, even if they have the same educational background.

Women have "different expectations of the rewards that come from pursuing higher education," says Ms. Fujimura-Fanselow, and that naturally lowers their educational aspirations.

Japan's Ministry of Education says virtually the same thing. Women do not advance to the highest levels of learning, ministry officials argue, because job opportunities are limited by discrimination, not because of any discrimination within the education system.

Kazuaki Hikida, the Mitsubishi Corporation's manager for recruitment and development, admits that women are hired "for a different tier" in the larger corporations. They are also routinely denied the "comprehensive and sophisticated training" that would enable them to advance through the ranks, he says, because of a general belief that women are less committed to work—that they will reject company transfers, leave at 5 P.M., and quit after childbirth.

Off the Management Track

In fact, few women ever enter the management track in Japanese industry. A recent study by the Prime Minister's Office found, for example, that, although the proportion of women managers increased by some 450 percent between 1960 and 1980, the total number is still minuscule. Only two women out of every 10,000 Japanese people were management-level workers in 1960; by 1980, there were 11 women managers per 10,000 people.

At the 450,000-worker Japan National Railway, one of the nation's largest employers, only four of the 4,000 managers are women. Even so, one official there says the company has "no immediate interest" in increasing that percentage.

Helping to "legitimize" this separate labor tier for women, says Ms. Fujimura-Fanselow, are several discriminatory labor statutes, such as one prohibiting women from working past midnight. And, she adds, equal-rights legislation currently being debated by the national Diet, such as a new law requiring employers to "make an effort" to eliminate discrimination in recruitment and hiring, contains enforcement language that is weak at best.

And Yet They Work

Still, more than 22 million Japanese women—almost half of the female population over the age of 15—work. Together, they make up almost 39 percent of the nation's labor force. And, according to the authors of *Working Women in Japan*, a book published as part of the Cornell University series of International Industrial and Labor Relations Reports, they have begun to fight discrimination.

"The increasing number of cases brought by working women to the courts is an index of women's growing self-consciousness and of their determination to achieve the equality that Japan's constitution and statutory law state is theirs," write Alice H. Cook, a Cornell University professor of industrial and labor relations, and Hiroko Hayashi, a Kumamoto University professor of law.

But changes may not come swiftly, say the authors, because "the Japanese employment system probably exploits women more extensively than is the case in any other industrialized country."

Changes that may be in the offing, however, will compound the school- and child-care-related problems already beginning to surface because of increases in the number of working mothers and one-parent families.

Day Care for the 'Guilty'

Some 2 million Japanese children already are enrolled in the nation's approximately 22,000 day-care facilities—a figure that equals the estimated number of centers in this country. Mothers who are able to place their children in the publicly sponsored programs pay the bargain rate of about $40 a month.

Precautions are also being taken to forestall the development of a Japanese version of America's "latchkey" problem. Most communities have instituted after-school programs in schools or community centers to supervise the children of working parents. In Osaka, for example, 38 percent of the elementary schools have special annexes to house such after-school programs.

According to Mitsuko Okamoto, who supervises an after-school program at Osaka's Suita Daini Elementary School, only students whose mothers work can attend, at a monthly charge of $10.

But Ms. Okamoto notes that the parental pressure for school achievement that is so prevalent in Osaka prevents many students from attending her relaxed, play-oriented program. Their parents send them to *juku*, instead.

And despite the child-care support system, says Emiko Kaya, a Tokyo high-school English teacher who is a mother with two elementary-school-age sons, for many women the old traditions that govern family responsibilities die hard. "Women are made to feel guilty if they work," she says, "even if their babies are well cared for."

Divorce and Work Linked

Working women are also made—however obliquely—to feel guilty about domestic trends that alarm the Japanese public.

The country, for example, has a rising divorce rate, which, though still less than one-fifth that of the United States, has nearly doubled since 1961, swelling the public day-care system and contributing to increased school violence. No less a source than the nation's Economic Planning Agency says this about its causes: "The tendency to pursue a higher level of education and increasing employment of women are contributing factors behind a more permissive attitude toward divorce."

Yet a recent public-opinion survey conducted by the Prime Minister's Office reveals how moralistically the average Japanese woman views her responsibilities in marriage.

When asked if divorce is a viable route for a woman to take if she is unable to find satisfaction with her spouse, only about one of every four Japanese women said yes. By contrast, more than two-thirds of the American women said yes, along with 79 percent of the British respondents and 80 percent of the West German women.

Clearly, such rigid and deeply ingrained perceptions of the rights and responsibilities of women will give way only gradually. After all, fewer than 30 years have elapsed since more than half of all Japanese women could look forward to "arranged marriages." Even today, 26 percent of all marriages are arranged.

What is lacking, say Ms. Cook and Mr. Hayashi, is a "propulsive force" that will mobilize women around the few who protest and will push forward the government initiatives to protect women. For now, they say of those few: "The amazing thing is that they keep at it."

That "Japanese women are nearly always ranked as inferiors," the anthropologist Chie Nakane says, is "not because their sex is considered inferior, but because women seldom hold higher social status."

Mama's Hospitality

Whenever I visit Kyoto, I usually stay near the T. family, because Mr. T.—a police detective, private-school owner, interpreter, boarding-house keeper, fortune teller, masseur, musician, etc.—is the best guide to Japanese culture I know and because his wife, "Mama," is a gracious hostess.

Whenever I drop by—no matter what the hour—Mama serves me something to eat or drink and tries to make me comfortable until the *sensei* (the term for a revered teacher) is free from his various business chores.

Mama does not like to leave the house and the school and boarding house compound. She leaves only for a short time every day to do the shopping at the supermarket a few blocks away.

To my way of thinking, she is a glorified servant to her husband, but she gets great pleasure from being invaluable to him and their children. She does everything—calling the *sensei's* students to cancel or reschedule classes; collecting student fees and rent for the boarding house; correcting homework and tests; cooking and cleaning the house, the school, and the boarding house; and serving as the *sensei's* telephone answering service.

When something goes wrong in the house—as when I accidently broke one of Mr. T.'s heirlooms—a valuable lacquered bowl that Mama left out of the cupboard—she is scolded severely by the *sensei*.

JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION

A traditional wedding ceremony.

Several years ago, the *sensei* told me a story about how he met his wife:

He ran an interpreting agency in Tokyo and traveled back and forth from Tokyo to Kyoto. One day, he was drinking with a friend, an older man, who got the *sensei* drunk and asked him if he would agree to marry his daughter. The *sensei* agreed and, true to his word, married the girl the next day in spite of a bad hangover.

But there was business to attend to and the *sensei* left for Tokyo immediately, not returning to his home in Kyoto for several months. When he came back, his wife greeted him at the door but did not recognize her husband.

"I'm sorry but I can't talk to you because my husband is away on business," she said when he came to the door. "You'll have to come back when he returns home. . ."